
ELDORADO MINE



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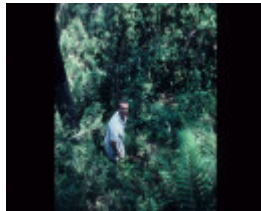
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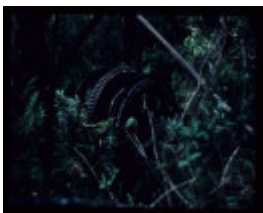
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Location

BOARDING HOUSE CREEK GAFFNEYS CREEK, MANSFIELD SHIRE

Municipality

MANSFIELD SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8123-0025

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 11641

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The Wallaby / Eldorado Reef System is west of and parallel to the main Gaffney's Creek and A1 reef system. The Eldorado is south of the Wallaby and was opened in 1864. A company was formed in 1865 and a new 10 head battery driven by a 14 hp steam engine purchased from Robinson & Scott. Steam was provided by a large boiler 16 feet (4.9m) long and 5 feet 6 inch (1.7m) in diameter. Ore was brought to the battery using a self acting incline tramway. It cost £4000 to set up the plant. The mine showed early promise and mining was conducted in a grand scale during the first two years. There were 35 men employed in 1867 for a weekly payroll of £127. Unfortunately the rich deposit was worked out by the middle of that year. Tributers were let in but even they gave up in 1869. Despite this downturn, the Eldorado was one of only eight mines out of forty that made a profit during the 1860s. After the company folded the Bank of Victoria held the lease until it was given up in 1871. Ah Louey and a group of his country men who worked it unsuccessfully for a couple of years. Then in 1873 Aarons formed the Royal Co. to work the mine. After a promising first crushing the gold cut out again and tributers found little gold for the rest of the decade. The mine was then idle from 1881 to 1892 when it was taken up again, after some encouraging trials the Great Eldorado G.M. Co was formed in 1895. The old Eldorado battery was moved up to the new workings and was operational by mid 1896, with large settling tanks and a pump providing water for the machine. Thirty men were employed raising stone from the upper tunnel using a horse haulage and a 50 foot whip shaft. A small township started to develop. However the good gold had finished by 1897 and the mine was let out on tribute. In 1898 a steam winder was purchased using a government mortgage of £750. At the end of the decade the company was in debt but the future looked bright.

In 1900 two men were killed when water broke through from an old winze into the stope where they were working. The mine manager was charged with manslaughter but was acquitted. The mine had indifferent results from 1900 to 1905. There was no gold production in 1905 and the government foreclosed on the £750 loan advertising the plant for sale, but there were no takers. The inventory of plant for sale included a 9 foot by 4 foot vertical boiler, a steam winch with two cylinders 8 inches in diameter, a safety cage and a bailing tank, a ten head battery housed in a 36 by 30 foot building with a 16 foot by 5.5 foot Cornish boiler, a single cylinder steam engine 14 inches in diameter and 24 inch stroke, other ancillary equipment and 2400 feet of steel rails and an office 24 by 12 feet. In 1913 the Mines Department let a contract to remove machinery from the Eldorado underground chamber, this involved reconditioning one of the adits and subsequently the mine was taken up again. Work continued underground until 1919, when it was reported that gold was in sight. However the war intervened and the mine was not worked again until the early 1920s. Then in 1926 a quartz formation was found. Under the management of Ben Lloyd, a 10 head battery driven by a Kynoch gas suction engine, from the Working Miners Mine at Kevington, was erected on site and commenced operating in 1927. However after an excellent start the ore body was exhausted by 1929. The mine closed again in 1932. There was another attempt some time later however this also proved unsuccessful. Production over the life of the mine was 10,000ozs at an average yield of 12.5 ozs. Some machinery was taken out on sleds in the mid 1930s.

(Source: Lloyd, B. & Combes, H., 1981, Gold at Gaffney's Creek, Shoestring Bookshop, Wangaratta, Victoria.) in Upper Goulburn Heritage Plan, Parks Victoria, 1999

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>